DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 329 098 FL 018 392

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TITLE The Goldstein-Silberberg-Karmel GOSIKA English Language Oral Proficiency Examination.
INSTITUTION Agudath Israel of America, New York, NY.
PUB DATE 79
NOTE 13p.
PUB TYPE Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *English (Second Language); *Language Proficiency; *Language Tests; *Listening Comprehension; *Oral Language; Test Format; Test Reliability; Test Validity; Verbal Tests

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this test is to evaluate a non-native speaking student's speaking knowledge of the basic structures of English, using the most frequently used words in the English Language. The test does not attempt to determine vocabulary level or student's ability to learn vocabulary effectively, rather the test focuses exclusively on aural/oral ability, breaking the communication process into specific basic aural/oral skills. The test can be used for placement in English-as-a-Second-Language instruction and diagnosis of specific problems. Test features include a simple, objective scoring system and testing procedures requiring no reading or writing. The scoring system takes into account the frustration level of the student by making the administration of more advanced sections contingent on successful completion of less advanced sections. Test items assess:(1) receptive ability; (2) ability to repeat verbatim; (3) simple production skills (declarative sentences); (4) article usage; (5) question formation; (6) negation; (7) comparisons; and (8) free expression. The guide describes the test sections for these skills, outlines scoring norms and score conversions, reports on the test's validity and reliability, gives general instructions for test administration, and includes pictures used in the test. (MSE)

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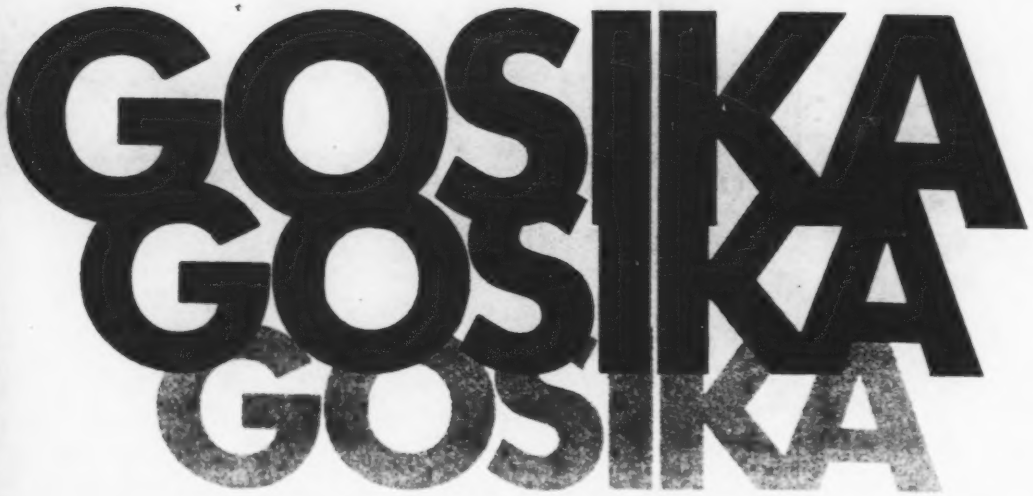
Information Guide

The Goldstein-Silberberg-Karmel



English Language Oral Proficiency Examination

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The Goldstein·Silberberg·Karmel

GOSIKA

English Language Oral Proficiency Examination

Project COPE

Project COPE (acronym for Career Opportunities and Preparation for Employment) was founded in January 1975 as the career guidance and job training agency of Agudath Israel of America. It sponsors an extensive range of programs including on-job-training, vocational education and classroom training through its network of community offices in New York City.

Agudath Israel of America, founded in 1922, is a broadly based Orthodox Jewish movement with chapters in major communities throughout the United States and Canada. It sponsors a wide range of constructive projects in the field of religion, education, children's welfare, and social action affecting the lives of young and old in far-flung parts of the Americas, Israel and Russia. The organization's leaders include the nation's most respected rabbinic scholars and its constituents consists of a comprehensive coalition of Orthodox Jews from every walk of life.

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GOSIKA

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

The purpose of this test is to evaluate the student's knowledge of basic structures of English. It does not attempt to determine vocabulary level or the student's ability to learn vocabulary effectively because they are not the most crucial tasks for the language learner. To succeed in learning a language, the student must acquire the structures of the language. Structures are learned more slowly than vocabulary because the latter is similar to "list learning," while structure acquisition is more complex. The structures which have truly been internalized by the learner are not likely to be forgotten because what has been learned is not a finite set of sentences or items but an underlying principle for the production of an infinite set of sentences. For this reason, the test concentrates on determining the structural knowledge of the student using vocabulary taken from the lowest levels of the most frequently used words of the language.

This test is an individual oral test which focuses exclusively on aural-oral ability. The "reading and writing" skills are based upon and are secondary to the aural-oral skills, in the learning process. Very often a written measure of linguistic ability is used to evaluate the total language ability of the learner. A written measure is frequently misleading because it tells little about the speaker's listening or speaking ability. Listening and speaking are primary skills both in terms of language learning and simple survival. Although written measures of linguistic ability may be useful and important, there is no correlation necessarily between a written test and the primary oral skills, and therefore, an oral test is far preferable to a written one for initial and follow-up evaluation of an ESL student.

GOSIKA is unique among oral tests of ESL in that it breaks down the communication process into specific basic aural-oral skills. This enables one to use the test both for ESL Class placement and diagnosis of specific problems. Other unique features of the test include an objective and simple scoring system and testing procedures that require no reading or writing at all (not even the filling out of an answer sheet) on the part of the test taker. Furthermore, the test scoring system takes into account the frustration level of the student by making administration of more advanced sections of the test contingent upon *successful* completion of less advanced segments of the test. This prevents the student from being forced to complete portions of the examination that are clearly beyond his competence. It also insures that administration time is not wasted.

Most commercially prepared ESL tests require considerable expenditures of money for the purchase of component parts such as individual student test booklets and separate booklets for the different test forms. GOSIKA differs from these in that it can be used relatively inexpensively through the optional purchase of detached individual scoring sheets. An explanation for the inclusion of the test items follows:

I. RECEPTION

In order to proceed with any testing or teaching procedure, one must first determine whether the student understands simple spoken English. By testing for physical, rather than verbal responses, we are able to determine understanding without the confusion that is sometimes associated with grammatical or incomprehensible responses. It is not always clear from verbal responses whether or not the student has understood the cue. Physical responses, however, are unambiguous and leave a clear impression of the level of knowledge.

II. REPEATING VERBATIM

If a learner is able to repeat what he has heard, it is indicative that he has perceived it correctly. The ability to listen effectively is both a necessary skill in the acquisition of a new language and a good measure of the aural-oral level of the listener. This section tests primarily for the learner's ability to perceive and repeat the present tense, past tense, and present progressive tense endings without the aid of redundancy clues such as "every day," and "now."

III. PRODUCTION

This section tests for simple production skills, i.e. the ability to produce simple declarative sentences of English. It cannot be assumed that because the student comprehends simple English, he/she is able to produce it at the same level. Comprehension almost invariably is at a higher level than production.

This section is divided into two parts: simple indentification of objects and the production of simple, common structures in response to verbal cues.

IV. ARTICLE USAGE

Knowledge of correct article usage is often difficult for the second language learner (although the level of difficulty for this skill varies from speech community to speech community). Incorrect article usage is an important factor in marking the learner's speech as foreign.

This section tests for the student's ability to perceive whether or not articles are being used correctly. By testing for perception rather than usage, the possibility of "performance" errors is eliminated and it is possible to determine whether or not the student has a systematic approach to separating correct sentences from incorrect ones.

V. QUESTION FORMATION

Question formation is a necessary skill for eliciting information in any language. It is a complex process, involving subject-auxiliary inversion, knowledge of "wh"-words and the ability to insert these words, the modal "do" (and/or other modals) appropriately. This section tests for the ability to form simple questions involving the use of the copula "be" and the modal "do" in their various forms, as well as more complex questions involving the use of "wh"-words.

VI. NEGATION

Negation is a basic necessity for communication in any language. In the English language, negation involves knowing how to use the modal "do" in the simple present and past tenses and how to insert "not" correctly in the progressive tenses. The ability to do this indicates a relatively sophisticated level of English language ability.

VII. COMPARISON

This section tests the student's ability to comprehend and produce structures involving the comparatives and superlatives of regular verbs. Knowledge of the comparative construction enriches the student's ability to specify and describe objects. This abilty considerably increases the speaker's descriptive range.

In order to produce comparisons of the above form, the student must be able to decline regular adjectives correctly and insert either the definite article "the" (in the superlative form) or the word "than" (in the comparative form).

VIII. FREE EXPRESSION

In this section, the overall speaking ability of the student is rated. The tester is asked to look for the level of fluency with which the speaker expresses himself in English. (Fluency is defined here in terms of speed, ease and general clarity of expression.) Frequently, although the learner's speech may contain a large number of errors, he/she is able to communicate effectively in English.

As the judgement made in this section is a subjective one, its point value (and effect on the total score) is low.

NORMS

The GOSIKA test is in the process of being more fully normed on a large, adult Russian immigrant population. Only tentative oral class placement levels can, therefore, be recommended. The publishers and authors welcome reports on matters such as the norms users of this instrument may set in other program and the student populations involved, comparative scores and correlations with other ESL instruments, etc. The tentative norms established to date are as follows:

PERCENT SCORE:

85 to 100 **ADVANCED ENGLISH SPEAKER**
At this level, an individual can function in a work situation comparable to that of a native speaker although instruction in areas such as idiomatic expression and practice in free expression may still be needed.

78 to 84 **INTERMEDIATE ENGLISH SPEAKER**
At this level, an individual can understand most of what is spoken. With hard work, a person at this level may be able to succeed if placed in a situation where he/she must function with native English speakers. In addition to the difficulties that an advanced speaker may encounter, an intermediate speaker can also be expected to make some errors when engaging in simple conversation and improperly employ grammatical forms that he/she has learned (but not internalized as part of his/her grammar) when generating speech. A person at this level may also speak in a hesitant manner.

55 to 69 **TRANSITIONAL ENGLISH SPEAKER**
An individual's ability to understand and speak is very limited at this level. Considerable work in ESL is needed before a student in this category can be expected to function adequately in a verbal situation with native English speakers. The following problems are not uncommon: not fully understanding instructions, requests and/or information questions, not being able to generate more than very simple, grammatically correct English sentences, making numerous tense errors, speaking in fragments where complete sentences are more appropriate, speaking haltingly or pausing frequently for long periods in an attempt to find words, etc.

0 to 54 **NON-ENGLISH SPEAKER**
An individual at this level is unable to understand most simple spoken English. Very basic ESL instruction is needed for people in this category. Areas requiring instruction are basic listening skills such as distinguishing between phonemes as well as repeating simple sentences, forming simple sentences, responding to simple informational questions, etc.

VALIDITY

This test purports to measure the student's receptive and productive abilities in the English language. The test items were constructed so as to require the student to perform specific tasks. The validity of such a construction is obvious—the tester simply observes the student to see if he can perform the required tasks. Without a clear understanding of what is said, the tasks cannot be correctly performed.

Another criterion of validity utilized was the rating of judges. Two groups, one consisting of seven professional staff members (4 teachers and 3 counselors) and the second of 30 fellow ESL students, were employed. Members of both these groups had been in daily contact with the test takers for at least 8 weeks. The judges were asked to give their opinion of the test takers' listening and speaking abilities in English. A combined rating for each group of judges was obtained. A correlation of .84 was found between the test and the professional group's rating, and one of .85 between the test and the student group's rating. The correlations between the test and judges ratings are sufficient to consider the test valid.

RELIABILITY

Reliability answers the question, "How self consistent is the test?" Will students, for example, who obtain high scores on one occasion, in general obtain high scores on a second taking? If the rank order of test scores differs markedly in a second administration than the order obtained in the first, the test may not be considered useful as an index of a particular test taker's ability. The reliability of this test was obtained by correlating Form A with Form B. ESL instruction did not occur between the administration of both forms. The reliability co-efficient obtained was .90 with a standard error of .03. This score indicates that the test clearly meets the requirements of self-consistency and is, therefore, a reliable instrument.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Each section of the test (with the exception of Sections VI and VIII) contains example sentences, sample sentences and test items. Example sentences are used by the tester to demonstrate the required task and may be repeated as often as necessary. Sample sentences are used to determine whether the student has correctly understood the instructions. If he/she performs a sample task correctly, the tester may proceed with the test items. If not, the tester should repeat the instructions and demonstrate the example sentence once more. The tester should then have the student try the sample task again.

For example, in Section II, Repeating Verbatim, the sample sentence is, "I have a nice apartment." The tester says to the student: "If I say, 'I have a nice apartment,' you must say, 'I have a nice apartment.' Let's try it with another sentence." At this point, the sample sentence is utilized. The tester says the sample sentence and then gestures to the student to perform the task (in this case, repeating the sentence word for word).

Sections I, III, and VII require the use of props and pictures as cues. Props should be neatly assembled on the desk or table in front of the tester. For Section I (Reception)—Form A, the tester needs the following props: a nickel, a piece of paper, a book, a pencil and a key. For Form B, the tester needs the following props: a dime, a pen, a book, a pencil and a key. For Section III (Production)—Form A, the tester needs pictures #2, 4, 5 and the following props: a pen and a piece of paper. For Form B, the tester needs pictures #1, 2, 3, 6 and the following prop: a pencil. For Section VII, the tester needs pictures #6, 7 and 8.

NOTE: Before administering the test, the tester should have the picture cues at hand for use in Sections III, and VII. The scoring sheet should also be at hand for scoring as the test proceeds.

The test is administered according to the section outline given below:

I Reception	V Question Formation
II Repeating Verbatim	VI Negation
III Production	VII Comparison
IV Article Usage	VIII Free Expression

The student may not proceed to Section II of the test unless he/she has attained a raw score of at least 5 on Section I. He/she may not proceed to Section III unless he/she has attained a raw score of at least 12 on Section II. Having passed Section II, the student may proceed in the test through all the remaining sections with the exception of VIII. In order to proceed to Section VIII, the student must have achieved an overall raw score of 60.

In administering the test, the tester should:

(a) make sure to speak clearly and naturally (neither too rapidly nor to slowly).

(b) not allow the student to see the written test items.

(c) read to himself/herself both the general and specific instructions as well as the instructions for scoring before administering the test.

(d) If the tester finds it necessary to repeat the instructions for the student, he/she should try to explain the instructions using different simpler ways of expressing that which the student fails to understand. If the tester speaks the student's language, he/she is *not* to translate the instructions although he may repeat them in English (and modify them accordingly) until the student is able to demonstrate the sample task correctly.

(e) In scoring the test, the tester should be aware that self-correction (i.e. if the student corrects himself without help from the tester) is to be counted as a completely correct answer and should be scored accordingly.

(f) The tester must listen carefully to student responses. If he/she is not sure the student has performed the task exactly as required, he/she should ask the student to repeat his response.

(g) In monitoring student responses, the tester should be aware that a response of "I don't know" at any point in the test, unless immediately self-corrected, is given a score of 0.

(h) The tester must not indicate by gesture, and/or verbal or facial expression that the student is either successfully or unsuccessfully performing the task. The tester must beware of the student's natural tendency to look for assurance and his/her own natural tendency to give it.

GOSIKA

RAW SCORE TO PERCENTAGE CONVERSION TABLE

RAW	%	RAW	%	RAW	%
75	100	56	75	37	49
74	99	55	73	36	48
73	97	54	72	35	47
72	96	53	71	34	45
71	95	52	69	33	44
70	93	51	68	32	43
69	92	50	67	31	41
68	91	49	65	30	40
67	89	48	64	29	39
66	88	47	63	28	37
65	87	46	61	27	36
64	85	45	60	26	35
63	84	44	59	25	33
62	83	43	57	24	32
61	81	42	56	23	31
60	80	41	55	22	29
59	79	40	53	21	28
58	77	39	52	20	27
57	76	38	51	19	25

The authors would like to express their appreciation to the following for their contributions to the successful production of this test:
The New York State Department of Labor
CETA Operations Division
Rabbi Menachem Lubinsky, Director of Project COPE.
Agudath Israel of America
Mrs. Mary Schreiber of Project COPE
Dvorah Lamm and Rochel Sheva Brody of Project COPE
Shiya Markowiz of M&G Design
The students of the Fresh Start Training Program

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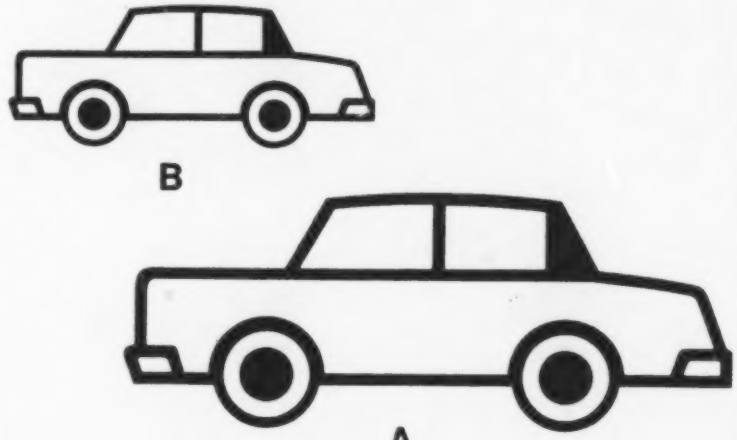

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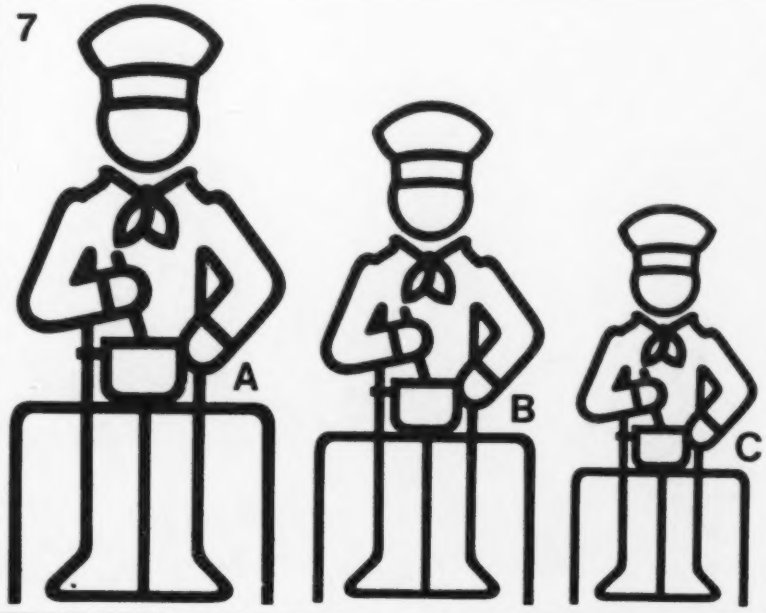

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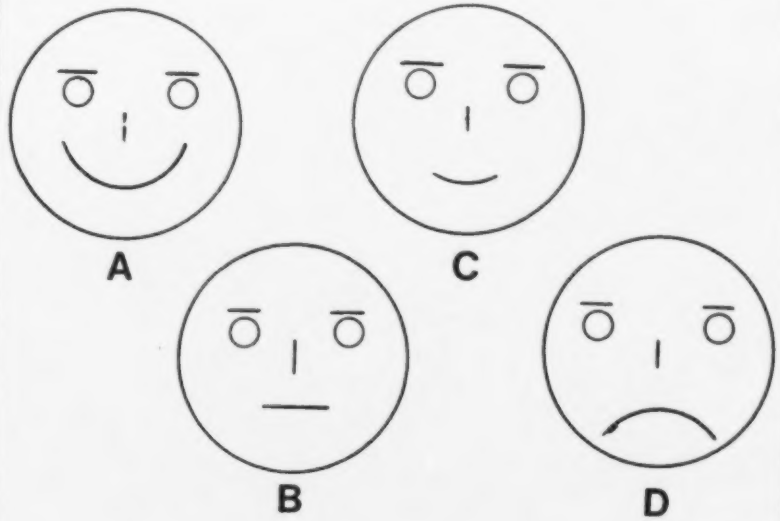

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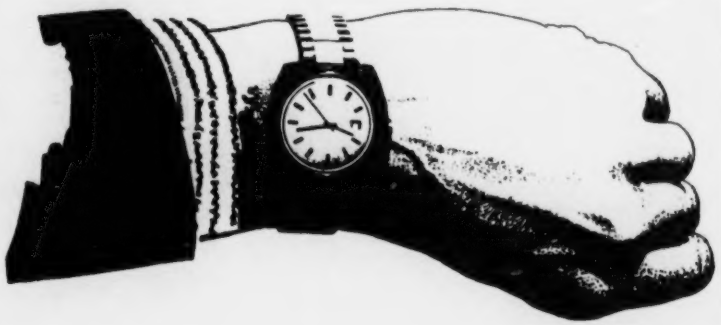

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